United Nations A/55/PV.109

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

109th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 25 July 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-fifth regular session and organization of work: request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 39

Draft resolution (A/55/L.90)

The President: As indicated in the footnote to document A/55/L.90, in order for the General Assembly to consider the draft resolution contained in the document, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 39, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 39 *(continued)*

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Draft resolution (A/55/L.90)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Fiji to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.90.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.90, under agenda item 39. The draft resolution is entitled "United Nations Electoral Observation Mission for the general elections in Fiji in August 2001" and is sponsored by the following Member States: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Spain, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, the United States of America and Vanuatu.

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I should also like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Barbados, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Denmark, Guyana, Ireland, Malta, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Nepal.

I should like to thank member States most sincerely for their participation in the informal consultations and for sponsoring the draft resolution.

Fourteen months ago, on 19 May 2000, a group of armed rebels stormed into the Parliament House while Parliament was in session and took hostage the elected Government. Its members were held in captivity for 56 days. Our country went through a very trying and turbulent period at that time, resulting in lawlessness, the loss of a few lives, a severe economic downtown, the purported abrogation of the Constitution, the imposition of martial law, the dismissal of the elected Government while it was in captivity, a change of the presidency and the appointment of the civilian interim Government.

The interim Government made a commitment at the outset to returning the country to democratically elected government within a two-year time-frame. I am pleased to state that elections are now scheduled for 25 August 2001, just 15 months since the incident, which is well within the two-year time-frame. We have thus come a long way in a short span of time, in the historical perspective, on the path to returning the country to an elected Government.

It is against this background that the Government of Fiji has invited United Nations observers to monitor the elections. Our electoral history has always yielded free and fair elections. However, the interest taken in and the support given by the international community for the well-being of our country during these very difficult days — instead of abandoning us — has led to the Government's inviting the United Nations observers to be present to oversee the elections in order to get first-hand information as well as to experience the transparency of the entire process.

Determined to regain the standards of democracy and good governance it is accustomed to, Fiji now takes this initiative to allow the United Nations to witness its return to parliamentary democracy and, with the good will and leverage of the Member States, it wishes to restore its credibility and reputation among its partners. Fiji is confident that the presence of the United Nations observers will send a very positive signal concerning the acceptance of the results and the future stability of the nation.

My delegation, with the sponsoring member States, commends the draft resolution to this Assembly for adoption by consensus.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum countries represented at the United Nations in New York: Australia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and my country, Nauru, in connection with the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.90, under agenda item 39, entitled "United Nations Electoral Observation Mission for the general elections in Fiji in August 2001", which is before this Assembly.

The history of the events that have brought about the general elections were well covered in the statement by the Ambassador of Fiji and therefore I will not dwell on them here. It is sufficient to say that the Pacific Islands Forum countries were deeply concerned at the events that led ultimately to the removal of a democratically elected Government in May 2000. Members of the Forum joined together in expressing these concerns during the most recent meeting of the Forum at Tarawa in October 2000 and the Forum leaders in their communiqué recognized and endorsed the need to address the fundamental causes of political instability in the region.

We, as co-sponsors of the draft resolution, welcome the action of the caretaker administration of the Republic of Fiji to call fresh elections under the 1997 Constitution and to open the upcoming general elections, scheduled for 25 August 2001, to international scrutiny. The latter act is unprecedented in the history of Pacific politics and is testimony to the desire of the people of Fiji for good governance through the application of parliamentary democracy. Furthermore, we see the call for United Nations observers to monitor the elections as Fiji's way of showing the international community its commitment to returning to constitutional democracy.

By providing observers, the United Nations will enhance confidence in the voting process and also in its outcome. It is important to the future stability of Fiji that, through the United Nations observers, the people

of Fiji accept the outcome of the elections as a fair reflection of the desire of the majority of the voters.

In conclusion, member States within the Pacific subregion are pleased by the broad support for the present draft resolution and we welcome the considerable number and wide range of sponsors. We hope that the draft resolution before us will find general support within the membership of this Organization.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union, which welcomes the general elections in the Republic of the Fiji Islands to be held in late August 2001. The European Union is deeply committed to the return of constitutional democracy to Fiji. As elsewhere in the world, the peace and well-being of that region are closely linked to the existence of stable democracies. The holding of periodic free elections is a first step and a new beginning.

We all understand that democratization always requires the cooperation and involvement of all citizens, along with vigilance and sustained attention to ensure respect for democratic values. Those elements guarantee the proper functioning and the health of a democracy. Here, we are convinced that the deployment of the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission will help create a climate of confidence and peace.

The international community and the United Nations system have an important role to play in support of Governments' efforts to promote and consolidate the democratic process. Accordingly, the European Union firmly supports draft resolution A/55/L.90 and has joined in sponsoring it.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): First of all, I would like to commend the caretaker Government of the Republic of the Fiji Islands for its decision to hold general elections at this early stage. We trust that the elections to be held from 25 August to 1 September will lead to the fulfilment of the caretaker Government's mandate to return Fiji to constitutional democracy.

We strongly welcome Fiji's request that the United Nations observe the upcoming elections. The draft resolution before us in document A/55/L.90 will respond to that request and will give the Secretary-General a mandate to establish the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission, which will be instrumental not only in monitoring the general elections but also in ensuring the smooth acceptance of the election results by the people. We fully support that draft resolution and are proud to be among its sponsors.

In line with our support for the draft resolution, Japan has decided to provide grant assistance totalling $370,000 to the United Nations Development Programme in support of its technical assistance package for the upcoming elections. As a part of that assistance, 10 Japanese nationals will participate in the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission.

The Republic of the Fiji Islands has experience as a constitutional democracy, with a record of free and fair elections. It is our sincere hope that the draft resolution before us will help restore constitutional democracy on the islands.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.90. I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Mustafa: Before the Assembly takes action on draft resolution A/55/L.90, I should like to inform members that the adoption of the draft resolution would not entail additional appropriations for the biennium 2000-2001. The required resources would be accommodated under section 3, "Political affairs," of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.90, entitled "United Nations Electoral Observation Mission for the general elections in Fiji in August 2001". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/55/L.90, Kazakhstan and Monaco have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.90?

Draft resolution A/55/L.90 was adopted (resolution 55/280).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 101 (*continued*)

High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development

Draft resolution (A/55/L.82)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/55/1019)

The President: Members will recall that, at its 97th plenary meeting, held on 21 March 2001, the Assembly decided to consider agenda item 101 directly in plenary meeting.

In connection with this item, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/55/L.82). The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.82 is contained in document A/55/1019.

We shall now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/55/L.82. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.82?

Draft resolution A/55/L.82 was adopted (resolution 55/245 B).

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Navarrete (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico welcomes the Assembly's adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/55/L.82 relating to continuing the substantive preparatory process for the International Conference on Financing for Development.

That conference, which the Assembly has decided will take place at Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002 and which will include a segment at the level of heads of State or Government, will provide an extraordinary opportunity to formulate an appropriate international response to the challenges of global economic interdependence. Such a response must be inclusive and participatory and must be based on the complete convergence of the efforts of all relevant actors: Governments, multilateral and regional institutions, the private sector and civil society.

Without a doubt, the success of the Monterrey summit will determine to a large extent the fulfilment of the commitments contained in the Millennium Summit Declaration and the likelihood of a truly successful Rio+10. Without adequate mobilization of financial resources, it will not be possible to achieve the goals of sustainable development at the global level.

In order to fulfil our commitment, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the preparatory process continues to be carried out in a constructive and progressive manner with the goal of achieving significant results. It should fully incorporate the important substantive inputs made during the preparatory process, including those that were recently included in the report of the Group of Eminent Persons established by the Secretary-General. Finally, it should benefit from other related efforts, including the fresh determination in the area of cooperation for development expressed at Genoa by the Group of 8.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to urge all Members of the Organization to reaffirm their commitment to the process of financing for development with full resolve and determination, as shown by the adoption by consensus of the relevant draft resolution.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of this stage of its consideration of agenda item 101.

Agenda item 122 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/55/521/Add.4)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 122.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.